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Mrs Cheryl Henderson  
Headteacher  
Slater Primary School  
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Dear Mrs Henderson

### **Short inspection of Slater Primary School**

Following my visit to the school on 20 February 2018, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report the inspection findings. The visit was the first short inspection carried out since the school was judged to be good in September 2013.

Based on the evidence gathered during this short inspection, I have identified some priorities for improvement which I advise the school to address. In light of these priorities, the school's next inspection will be a full section 5 inspection. **There is no change to the school's current overall effectiveness grade of good as a result of this inspection.**

Following the last inspection, leaders were asked to ensure that the school policies for handwriting and calculations in mathematics were implemented consistently throughout the school. When we looked at pupils' work, we saw that while there were improvements in handwriting and presentation for some pupils, for many, this is not rapid enough. Leaders have not ensured that teachers' expectations of the progress pupils can make in improving the quality of their handwriting and presentation of their work are consistently high enough.

In mathematics, teachers often promote pupils' fluency in understanding mathematical concepts and different methods of calculation well and methods taught are generally appropriate to the different ages of pupils. However, this is also inconsistent. Teachers do not consistently move pupils on to more efficient methods or more challenging work quickly enough when pupils are ready. As a result, some pupils' progress, particularly that of the most able, is not as rapid as it should be.

An additional line of enquiry I explored with you during the inspection was the impact of your work to improve pupils' progress in reading in key stage 2. You have identified pupils' reading comprehension skills as an area for improvement. Actions

to tackle this have only been recently introduced. Leaders have not ensured that their actions and the focused work to develop pupils' comprehension skills in upper key stage 2, are securely implemented by all staff.

The pace of improvement has not been as quick as it could be. You have accurately identified the broad areas in which the school needs to improve. Your improvement plans, however, are not sufficiently focused to hold staff more effectively to account and help drive more rapid improvement. You and other staff have a good understanding of how well pupils are doing in each class and have regular, detailed meetings to discuss pupils' learning. However, teachers' assessments of pupils' learning are not consistently accurate and leaders do not check the progress of different groups of pupils carefully enough, to ensure that their actions are having the maximum impact.

Since the previous inspection, there have been substantial staff changes. You recently introduced training to develop the role of middle and subject leaders. Staff I spoke with are positive about recent training and the support you and your deputy headteacher provide. You are beginning to establish a middle leadership team and staff are developing their skills in monitoring standards. Their leadership roles are, however, at an early stage of development and they do not yet have the skills they need to be effective in raising standards. Again, the pace of the development of middle leadership roles has not been as rapid as it could be.

The governing body, many of whose members are new, has a good understanding of its role and an overview of the school's strengths and areas in which it needs to improve. The governing body's questioning of information about pupils' progress is improving. However, governors' understanding of the progress made by pupils in different classes and subjects is not as sharp as it could be. Support from the local authority has not ensured that leaders have an accurate overview of pupils' progress across the school. Consequently, the governing body are not as effective as they could be in challenging and holding leaders to account.

Pupils behave and conduct themselves well at all times of the school day. Teachers teach them to be reflective, polite and caring. Pupils listen well and apply themselves to all that is asked of them. Pupils generally have positive attitudes to their learning. Pupils in Year 6 told me enthusiastically how a school trip to a museum, for example, had helped them with their writing because 'first-hand experience makes your writing better'.

While a small number were less happy with some aspects of the school's communications, the large majority of parents and carers I spoke with or who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, were very positive in all respects. Some commented on how supportive staff are and referred to how the school 'thinks of the whole child'.

## **Safeguarding is effective.**

There is a strong culture of safeguarding. The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. The school's single central record and recruitment processes are thorough. Leaders take timely action when they have any concerns about pupils' well-being. Records are detailed. Staff receive relevant and up-to-date training, including understanding their responsibilities in relation to the government's 'Prevent' duty. Governors have also received safer recruitment and safeguarding training.

Pupils spoke with confidence about how the school teaches them to keep themselves safe, for example when online or outside of school. Pupils say teachers respond to any concerns they have and bullying is rare. Pupils also understand the importance of respecting others from different backgrounds, cultures or who have different beliefs. One pupil said, 'Everyone is unique. We're all different. We need to respect our differences.' The very large majority of parents to whom I spoke or who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, said their children are safe.

## **Inspection findings**

- Many aspects of pupils' attainment and progress were strong in the published information at the end of 2017. However, pupils' current work shows that their progress is too inconsistent across the school as a whole. Not enough pupils, including the most able and those who are disadvantaged, are making good progress in writing and mathematics.
- Sometimes, teachers do not use information about pupils' learning well to ensure that pupils move on to more challenging work quickly enough. Teachers do not consistently ensure that learning is matched well to pupils' needs. In mathematics, for example, pupils sometimes complete many examples of work at the same level of difficulty. The opportunities teachers provide for pupils to develop their problem-solving and reasoning skills are inconsistent.
- The often strong content of pupils' writing is frequently let down by poor spelling, grammar and punctuation. Sometimes, pupils make repeated errors which teachers do not tackle. Teachers are not consistent in ensuring that pupils are more precise and accurate, appropriate to their ability. As a result, some pupils' progress in writing is not as rapid as it could be.
- Leaders have ensured that staff have received training on the assessing of pupils' learning, including work to moderate pupils' work with staff at other schools. However, pupils' work shows that the assessments of some pupils as working at and above the expectations for their age at this stage of the year in writing and mathematics are not accurate. As a result, leaders and teachers do not have an accurate picture of pupils' attainment and progress.
- Leaders' plans for improvement and their evaluation of the school's performance do not sharply analyse the progress of different groups of pupils in different classes and subjects. As a result, they do not set ambitious and measurable targets to hold staff to account more effectively and drive more rapid

improvement. The areas for improvement identified at the previous inspection have not been fully tackled.

- Pupils are not taught consistently to take pride and care over their work generally and in different subjects.
- Teachers are often enthusiastic and have sound subject knowledge which they use to question pupils to develop their thinking.

### **Next steps for the school**

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- they continue their work to ensure that teachers' assessments of pupils' attainment and progress are accurate
- they analyse information about the progress of different groups of pupils more carefully to identify targets to hold staff to account more effectively and help drive more rapid improvement, including in reading
- they establish effective middle and subject leadership roles to help raise standards
- the governing body is more effective in holding leaders to account for the progress of different groups of pupils in different classes and subjects
- all teachers use information about pupils' learning effectively to decide when to move pupils on to more challenging work more quickly, particularly in mathematics
- all teachers have equally high expectations of the quality of presentation of pupils' work
- all teachers teach pupils to use accurate and appropriate spelling, grammar and punctuation in their writing in all subjects.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Leicester. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

John Lawson  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

The inspector met with the headteacher, deputy headteacher and other members of staff, members of the governing body and a representative from the local authority. The inspector spoke with parents at the beginning of the day. He met with pupils

informally during the school day, as well as in a formal meeting with a group of pupils. The inspector observed teaching and learning in six classes jointly with the headteacher. During these visits, the inspector looked at pupils' work and spoke with pupils to evaluate the quality of their learning. He also examined, together with the headteacher and deputy headteacher, pupils' work in a sample of their books.

The inspector scrutinised a variety of documents relating to safeguarding, behaviour, the quality of teaching, learning and assessment, pupils' attainment and progress, staff performance and leaders' plans for improvement. The inspector assessed the impact on standards of leaders' actions taken since the last inspection, as well as additional lines of enquiry. He considered the 10 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire. The inspector also considered the range and quality of information provided on the school's website.